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United States Senate 677
WASHINGTON, DC 20510-4402

August 18, 2017

FCC Chairman Ajit Pai
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street SW
Washington, DC 20554

Dear Chairman Pai:

The Utah Education and Telehealth Network (UETN) is a nationally recognized state network consortium dedicated to education, research, and telehealth services. Over the years, UETN has successfully leveraged state funds with E-Rate funding with public-private partnerships to provide a robust education network serving Utah's schools and libraries.

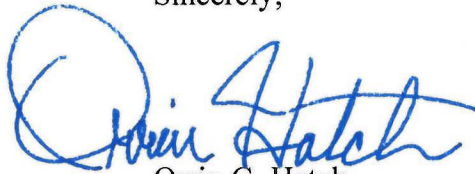
In July 2016, UETN applied for E-rate funding for a critical 70-mile rural and remote fiber project in Daggett County pursuant to a leased-services contract UETN has with a service provider, Strata Networks. (Daggett County is an extremely underserved area in Northeastern Utah with subpar broadband access.) UETN followed all the published guidance by the FCC and USAC on this project, and it is not unlike other projects UETN has successfully completed with telecom service providers across the state.

It is my understanding that UETN has not received a funding decision despite its continual outreach and responses to multiple questions from USAC to both UETN and Strata Networks. The administrative delays from USAC and the FCC have severely impacted this project's timeline and have led to increased costs, making it impossible for the vendor to complete the job. This is despite Strata Network's willingness to invest over 50 percent of the capital expenditures necessary for construction of the project.

In June, in an effort to get the 2016 Daggett fiber application approved, UETN staff traveled to Washington, DC to ask for assistance from both USAC and the FCC. UETN met briefly with Jay Schwarz from your office, as well as FCC staff from the Wireline Competition Bureau and USAC staff. In these meetings, UETN expressed the urgency of the Daggett project and concern about delays in funding approvals for consortia applicants.

I respectfully request your attention and prompt consideration of UETN's funding request. The stakeholders that can benefit from this project are: the residents of Daggett County, Daggett County Schools, the Utah Department of Transportation, the Bureau of Reclamation, the U.S. Forest Service, and others. Many partners have done an extraordinary amount of work to see this project succeed. I would hate to see it fail based on administrative delays both within USAC and the FCC. Thank you for your attention to this very important matter facing some of the most underserved populations in my home state of Utah.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Orrin Hatch", with a large circular flourish on the left side.

Orrin G. Hatch
United States Senator



FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
WASHINGTON

OFFICE OF
THE CHAIRMAN

February 8, 2018

The Honorable Orrin G. Hatch
United States Senate
104 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510


Dear Senator Hatch:

Thank you for your inquiry into the status of the E-rate application filed by the Utah Education and Telehealth Network (UETN) with the Universal Service Administrative Company (USAC). In your letter, you encourage USAC and the Commission to expedite a resolution of UETN's application and to give the funding request full and fair consideration.

As you note, members of my staff, as well as the staff from the Commission's Wireline Competition Bureau have met with UETN representatives to further discuss their views on the application. In addition, in September 2017, I personally met with UETN's CEO Ray Timothy to discuss the matter. We understand that, after reviewing new information, USAC was able to approve funding for the funding request. I am pleased to hear of this outcome and to know this will help improve school connectivity in Dagget County.

I appreciate your interest in this matter. Please let me know if I can be of any further assistance.

Sincerely,


Ajit V. Pai